

DR. HORN RESIGNS

F. Don James Seen Possible Stand-In

The probability that Dr. F. Don James, vice president of the University of Rhode Island for academic affairs, will take over the reins of the university as acting president, was raised by Dr. Francis H. Horn's letter of resignation.

Dr. Horn noted that there is an "able acting president at RIC, and our able academic vice president, Dr. Don James, could handle the situation at URI."

Dr. James came to URI in August of 1965, when he was appointed Vice President for Aca-

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Professor Cites Horn's Devotion

by A Faculty Member

The resignation of Dr. Francis H. Horn from the University of Rhode Island is an occasion that evokes melancholy feelings. The loss of his active and inspiring leadership will be difficult to compensate.

His administration has been marked by innovation, expansion, and convulsive change. This is as it should be, since his tenure in office coincided with the growing pains that brought URI to the threshold of becoming an educational institution of notable distinction. His achievements as the leader of our university are too obvious to dwell on.

What this occasion probably calls for is an assessment of the man's qualities as observed by this faculty member. As a teacher and administrator he brought to URI a background of great knowledge seasoned with experience and tempered with pragmatism. His devotion to the land grant and liberal concepts of education was a rare blend of the vocational and the esthetic best suited to URI's circumstances.

His vision of the direction which the university should take was sound and practical. Herman Eschenbacher, the historian of land grant education in Rhode Island, summed this vision best when he compared Dr. Horn with his predecessors.

"The new president (Dr. Horn) was pragmatic, energetic, an enthusiastic supporter of public higher education as the ultimate expression of democracy and the surest means of its extension. Like Dr. Kenyon L. Butterfield, he brought to the post an aggressive, sometimes abrasive, manner that radiated pur-

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"I feel we should . . . resolve to encourage every Rhode Island youngster to extend the frontiers of his or her personal knowledge to the fullest extent possible so that every young man and woman, whatever his talents, will be able to confront successfully the demands of an unknown world of the future. By so doing, we in education fulfill our basic commitment to our State and to mankind."

—Dr. Francis H. Horn

URI-RIC Matter Is Prime Reason

Dr. Francis H. Horn, president of the University of Rhode Island, today announced his resignation from the post which he has held for more than nine years.

Although the resignation will become formally effective on Aug. 31, Dr. Horn will be on leave of absence in the rank of professor for an additional year to protect his state retirement rights.

Dr. Horn's resignation was accepted Wednesday by the Board of Trustees of State Colleges who held an all-day meeting at the Kingston campus.

It was announced to the faculty at a special meeting held in Edwards Auditorium at 10 a.m. today.

Dr. Horn, in a "Dear George" letter of resignation to George W. Kelsey, chairman of the Board of Trustees, cited three reasons for his decision to leave URI.

His primary reason, he said, was to clear the way for the trustees to decide on the future relations of URI and Rhode Island College.

Dr. Horn's view is that Rhode Island cannot afford two universities and that URI and RIC should be merged as a single institution with separate campuses.

His departure, he said, will clear the way for the trustees to make their decision without his being put in the role of empire builder.

Dr. Horn was not available for comment but an administration spokesman said that the university president's recent venture into the political arena had no bearing on his decision.

Dr. Horn had sought the Democratic Party's endorsement for the Congressional seat left vacant by the death of Congressman John E. Fogarty. He failed to receive it and withdrew from the contest.

During the period after his departure from the post and before his resignation from the system becomes effective a year later, the spokesman said, Dr. Horn will be on call as a consultant.

In his letter of resignation, Dr. Horn suggested that Dr. F. Don James, academic vice president, "could handle the situation at URI" so that the trustees "would not be rushed into a hasty decision" in the URI-RIC matter.

Dr. Horn, who took over the reins of administering URI from Dr. Carl R. Woodward, president emeritus, in 1958, listed three reasons for his decision to resign.

Besides the matter of the status of URI and RIC, he noted the trend among university presidents to make a change after 10 years in the job as well as the fact that he is "exceedingly tired," partly because of the unusually heavy demands made upon him in connection with URI's 75th anniversary activities.

After receiving Dr. Horn's letter, Mr. Kelsey said that Dr. Horn's "years as president of URI have embraced a magnitude of change in public higher education that has engendered a host of difficult problems for those guiding the destinies of American colleges and universities — and nowhere have these changes been more emphatic than in New England, especially here in our own state.

"Yet during these years, under Dr. Horn's leadership, the university has developed solidly in dimension, diversity and stature.

"We are most grateful to Dr. Horn and hope that these accomplishments are a source of real satisfaction to him and Mrs. Horn."

Although Dr. Horn's resignation was a tightly-guarded secret on campus, it was apparent on campus as early as Monday

Text of Resignation

The following is the complete text of the letter of resignation from Dr. Francis H. Horn to George W. Kelsey, chairman of the Board of Trustees of State Colleges.

February 23, 1967

Mr. George W. Kelsey
Board of Trustees Office
URI Extension Bldg., Suite 208
199 Promenade Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

Dear George:

"I would like to resign as president of the University of Rhode Island at the close of the current academic year. Ever since Barnaby Keeney announced his resignation from Brown in June of 1965, indicating that ten years was about as long a

tenure as a university president should have, I have, as you know, half-seriously said that he put the rest of us presidents on the spot. But in all seriousness, I have recognized that President Keeney was essentially correct, and, in fact, was expressing an idea that has been set forth in books written by university presidents.

"I have discussed this idea on a number of occasions with some of my URI colleagues and some of my fellow presidents and have given the matter considerable thought. As a result I had pretty much made up my mind that after I had completed ten years of service at URI, a period necessary to protect my retirement benefits in the State System, I would seek a new position.

"I have come to the conclusion that in a situation involving substantial physical and academic development of a university, the president makes his major contribution during the first decade of his administration. Thereafter, given a year or two either way, and with some notable exceptions which come to mind, the president becomes less effective, and indeed may stay on until his presence in office becomes an actual detriment to the institution. As a student of higher education, I am not unmindful of the all too many examples of such presidents.

"I did not want that to happen to me at URI, even though the thought of remaining here is

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Editorials

Evasive But Respected

Dr. Horn's resignation may come as a shock, not only to those faculty members who have known him for years, but to the students who have known him for a much shorter time. His name has become almost synonymous with the University and it will be a long time before the University will adjust to his absence.

A student's relationship to Dr. Horn is much different from that of the faculty. But it is unlikely that the faculty do not see in Dr. Horn a man with the gifts which make a university president worth his stuff. He has what must be called the "knačk" for a difficult administrative post. For a reporter whose main concern was the discovery of some closet skeleton the relationship is as often comic as not.

Our president is a very shrewd and a very clever man. He operates as a politician as well as an educator. He can sidestep questions with the ease and polish of the most experienced office holder, which indeed he is. He can be as frustrating as he can be helpful, and usually more so. He answers a simple question with a complex one. When you speak to him, you have to be prepared. He will catch the slightest flaw in any argument. He keeps on the defensive a reporter who thinks he is on the offensive. And just when you think you might have an answer to some pertinent question, he will meander on with assorted generalities. He can not be successfully quarrelled with.

However difficult Dr. Horn may have seemed to the inquisitive reporter, our retiring president always commanded respect and admiration.

In so many ways an era is passing. There will be a lot of statements from a lot of people and they will say similar things: Rhode Island is losing one of its foremost educators. For a student reporter, URI is also losing one of its foremost question evaders.

C. B.

One Editor's Point of View

At every university there has to be someone who grits his teeth and holds everything together while unending legions of students try to tear things apart. If both sides, the administration and the students, fight hard enough for what they believe to be best for the university, the net result is progress.

Dr. Horn is one hell of an adversary.

R. G.

Devotion

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pose and vitality. He shared Howard Edwards' sense of mission and Carl R. Woodward's sense of service, but their expression was distinctly his own; sometimes iconoclastic, often provocative.

"In the development of his administration, Dr. Horn, more than any of his predecessors, was concerned with the education of the individual as a matter of fulfillment as well as a means of finding one's place in society."

"A liberal education he held to be an attitude, 'primarily a way of looking at things,' a clarity of vision 'that frees the mind,' rather than a corpus of knowledge. It was identified by

a kind of tough-minded perception of reality that cut through pretension and tradition."

"So far as the university was concerned the end in view was an imparting of the professional competence required by the national welfare, while inculcating a sense of individualism and self-reliance."

It is obvious that a man of such vision was bound to be the center of controversy. Dr. Horn was no exception. He had his share of friends and enemies. In the final analysis what counts are competence, sincerity, and integrity, and no fair-minded man of good will can deny that Dr. Horn had all of these qualities in great abundance.

I wish him well in his future endeavors, and hope that we shall have as good luck in picking his successor as we had in 1958 when we selected him.



Dr. F. Don James

F. Don James

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demic Affairs, replacing Dr. Ernest W. Hartung.

Born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Sept. 14, 1927, Dr. James received his A.B., magna cum laude, from Oklahoma City University in 1951. He earned his S.T.B. from the Boston University graduate school of Theology in 1954, and the Ph.D. from the Boston University grad school in 1959, where his major field of study was Biblical Literature.

In 1961, he was appointed Assistant Dean at Miami University, in Oxford, Ohio, and in September of 1964, acting dean. He was also made director of the Undergraduate Center of International Study at Miami University in 1962.

Text of Letter (Cont.)

personally an attractive one. A university president is tempted, and all too often succumbs to the temptation, to remain on campus to enjoy the fruits of his labors. But I am convinced that regardless of any personal desires to the contrary, it would not be in the best interests of the University for me to stay till retirement in 1980. I am mindful, moreover, that one of the real pros in this business, Herman Wells of Indiana, an outstanding exception to the ten-year rule, upon his retirement advised other university presidents at a memorable dinner in New York, to "quit while you're ahead." I want to do that, and, if necessary, err on the side of too soon rather than too late.

"Under normal conditions, I should have preferred to have stayed on the job for at least another year, thus completing ten years of active leadership of URI. But two factors dictate giving up the reins a year sooner, provided the Board will make some suitable arrangements to protect my retirement benefits. The first is that I am exceedingly tired. One of my colleagues who resigned earlier this month from the University of Florida attributed his action to 'presidential fatigue.' Ours is a demanding job and mine this year, because of the special public relations and fund-raising activities connected with our Seventy-fifth Anniversary celebration, has been especially demanding. Even if I hadn't made up my mind definitely to resign now, I had planned, as the Board knows, to request a leave for at least half of the 1967-68 year.

"But there is another very important factor that prompts my resignation at this time. The major problem currently facing the Board of Trustees of State Colleges is, in my opinion, the relationship between Rhode Island College and the University of Rhode Island. Shortly after I came to the State, I became convinced that Rhode Island could not support two universities, yet would have to do so if trends discernible at RIC continued. Dr. Gaige, in his last annual report as president, made his opinion perfectly clear that RIC should become a 'small university.' The Board has retained two outstanding former university presidents as consultants to advise on this problem.

"The only solution, I long ago concluded, and so indicated to the Board, was a consolidation of RIC and URI into one university with major campuses in Providence and Kingston. I have believed this so strongly that

for some two years now, I have told the Board that if it were to decide on such a merger, I would resign as president of URI (assuming some arrangement for retirement benefits) as evidence that my position was not dictated by personal ambition or 'empire building,' but because I was convinced such a move was in the best interests of higher education in the State and therefore of all Rhode Island citizens.

"The resignation of President Gaige after fourteen years at RIC, provides the Board with a remarkable opportunity to consider the whole question completely objectively, provided there is also no URI president to be taken into account in the Board's study of the situation. There is an able acting president at RIC, and our able Academic Vice President, Dr. Don James, could handle the situation at URI, so that the Board would not be rushed into a hasty decision. But it should not be delayed too long, so I believe I should remove myself this year, not next year. It is this factor which has weighed most heavily in my coming to the conclusion that I should resign at the end of this, my ninth year, as president of URI.

"In view of the many activities scheduled for the rest of this academic year in which I have been closely involved, and the natural desire to finish out especially this anniversary year, let alone the task of clearing the load of work connected with the termination of any university administration of nine years' duration, I believe it desirable that I should continue as active president to the end of June. Because of the necessity, however, of completing ten years of service for retirement purposes, I propose that the Board retain me in my professorship, but on leave status, for another year.

"This letter, therefore, is a formal proposal to the Board that I resign as president of the University of Rhode Island, effective August 31, 1967, with the understanding that I shall terminate my official duties by the end of June and take my accumulated vacation during July and August. Further, that I resign from the University as a professor, effective July 31, 1968.

"Once an individual has made up his mind to resign, he is anxious to have the matter decided quickly. Consequently, I shall appreciate the Board's acting on this request as soon as possible, and making known its decision to the public.

Cordially,
Francis H. Horn
President

Dr. Horn Resigns

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that news of major significance was in the air.

Some faculty members in particular were aware that a story of "earthshaking proportions," as one phrased it, was to be made known today. But speculation on the nature of the story was varied.

The university's official announcement of the resignation also disclosed that it had been discussed informally with members of the Board of Trustees before Wednesday's meeting.

Explaining in his letter that he considers the URI-RIC relationship "the major problem currently facing the Board of Trustees," Dr. Horn said that he has been convinced since coming to Rhode Island that the state "could not support two universities, yet would have to do so if trends discernible at RIC are continued."

His reference was to the position of Dr. William C. Gaige, former president of RIC and now a higher education administrator in Massachusetts.

Dr. Horn recalled that Dr. Gaige, in his last report as RIC president, has taken the position that RIC should become a "small university," a position that the URI president has consistently opposed.

With acting presidents at both RIC and URI, Dr. Horn said, the trustees would have an unimpeded opportunity to settle the problem.

"The only solution, I long ago concluded, and so indicated to the board, was a consolidation of RIC and URI into one university with major campuses in Providence and Kingston," Dr. Horn wrote.

In reference to the matter of a university president stepping down after a decade in office, Dr. Horn recalled the statement of Dr. Barnaby C. Keeney when he retired as president of Brown University.

Dr. Keeney and others had observed, Dr. Horn said, that "in a situation involving substantial physical and academic development of a university, the president makes his major contributions during the first decade of his administration."

Reviewing the considerations that led to his decision, Dr. Horn said also that he is "exceedingly tired." Citing a condition that a colleague once called "presidential fatigue," Dr. Horn said, "Ours is a demanding job."

Especially heavy demands have been made upon him in the areas of public relations and fund raising during the 75th anniversary year, he said.

Dr. Horn said that he has offered to resign in the past, on condition that adequate retirement plans be worked out for him, so that the URI-RIC merger could be worked out and to show that his "position was not dictated by personal ambition or 'empire building,' but by his conviction that the change would be in the best interests of higher education in the state.

The president's proposal to the trustees was that he terminate his official duties as president by the end of June and that he take accumulated vacation during July and August.

So that he can complete the 10 years of service required for him to qualify for a state pension program, he proposed that he retain his status as professor of education, on leave status, until July 31, 1968.